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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 000094

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SUBJECT: CZECHS ON JAN 30 GAERC

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Classified By: A/DCM Michael Dodman for reasons 1.4 b+d.

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary. At the January 30 GAERC, the Czechs will urge the EU not to engage with the newly elected Hamas government unless it renounces violence, recognizes Israel, and accepts the two-state process. On Iran, the Czechs will support referral to the UNSC, and will continue to hope for a diplomatic solution to the crisis. On Kosovo, the Czechs have unequivocally adopted the EU position on Kosovo, and they support international presence after the conclusion of status talks. On Belarus, the Czechs support a strong EU-U.S. statement against Lukashenko, but note that the Belarusian government may not listen: the GOB may have deliberately issued travel visas with different dates for the joint meeting participants. End summary.

[¶2.](#) (SBU) Poloff met Jan 26 with Miroslav Kolatek, Deputy of the Czech MFA's CFSP Department, to deliver reftel talking points, to deliver the text of the Secretary's condolences upon the death of Kosovo President Rugova, and to discuss the January 30 GAERC. As summarized below, the discussion focused on the Middle East, the Balkans, and Belarus.

The Middle East

[¶3.](#) (C) On the recent election in Palestine, the Czech position is that the EU should not engage with Hamas unless it: (a) renounces violence, (b) recognizes Israel, and (c) embraces the two-state process. The Czechs also advocate for further cooperation between the EU and the U.S. on the Middle East peace process.

[¶4.](#) (C) On Iran, the Czechs support referral to the UNSC, although referral will be complicated. They favor a diplomatic solution, and believe imposition of sanctions should be the last recourse. Kolatek also said Italy has proposed text that would require the E-3 to consult more with other EU member states on Iran. There is no consensus on this proposal, however. The Czechs do not support it, as consultations would become even more lengthy and complicated. Instead, they support EU-3 + 1 negotiations. They urge maximum transparency, however, and expect the EU-3 to operate within commonly agreed guidelines.

[¶5.](#) (C) On Iraq, the Czechs do not expect any formal GAERC conclusion on Iraq prior to official certification of the election results. Generally, the Czechs welcome the successful elections in December, and hope a stable parliament (they predict a coalition government) is established. Regarding the withdrawal of forces, the Czechs

think any withdrawal should be the result of an agreement between the Iraqi government and the international community -- not the result of public pressure in any Coalition member state.

The Balkans

¶16. (C) On Kosovo, following President Rugova's untimely death, the GOCR believes that the EU should call on Kosovo's leaders to remember their responsibility to ensure a peaceful and lawful transfer of power. The Czechs think international presence will need to continue after the completion of status talks. The UN should have the lead role, and the EU should provide a supplemental role -- one that is stronger than its current role. The EU may be able to assist in such "visible" areas as security, institution building, and economic recovery.

¶17. (C) Kolatek explained that the Czech government, at a cabinet meeting on Jan 25, had formally approved the MFA's position on Kosovo as government policy (the MFA position mirrors that of the EU and international community that resolution of Kosovo's status should not involve changing borders; PM Paroubek, following a visit to the region last year, had previously advocated for the partition of Kosovo to permit merger of a Serb enclave with Serbia). Kolatek described an interagency working group on Kosovo that had been established to resolve the differences over Kosovo policy, composed of representatives from the MFA, the MOD, the MOI, the Czech parliament (including the president of the Foreign Affairs Committee), and the intelligence community. The working group will continue to meet throughout 2006 to

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monitor the Kosovo status negotiations. (In a separate discussion with A/DCM, MFA Director for Eastern Europe Tomas Szunyog described the cabinet decision as a complete victory for the MFA. He said that he understood the PM's agreement to retreat from his controversial position on Kosovo was a result of Paroubek hearing a consistent message on the topic from a number of European leaders during recent travels.)

¶18. (C) On Montenegro, Kolatek said the status quo is unsustainable. Democratic standards must be implemented, and consensus must be reached to achieve that goal. He hoped voter turnout for the referendum would be high, to ensure the legitimacy of the results. The referendum must be respected even if the government loses.

Belarus

¶19. (C) Regarding the EU-U.S. joint statement, the Czechs strongly support such a statement. Kolatek noted, however, that the joint meeting with the Belarusian government may not take place. The GOB has apparently issued travel visas with different dates for A/S Fried and European Council Director Robert Cooper.

¶10. (C) Regarding the March presidential election, the Czechs welcome the GOB's decision to permit election monitoring. Kolatek said the Czechs will participate in the Visegrad-4 team, which is expected to provide 400 monitors for the election. (Note: In a separate discussion on Jan 27, MFA Eastern Europe Director Szunyog told A/DCM that the V-4 monitoring team for Belarus would number 100 people, of which the Czechs were prepared to provide 25; a similar team would be prepared for monitoring the Ukrainian election. Szunyog added that he understood Poland was planning to send to Belarus a very large group of monitors, separate from the V-4 team, which could account for the number Kolatek cited.)

¶12. (C) Finally, Kolatek said there is no consensus on a

GAERC conclusion that would facilitate ease of travel for Belarusians. Lithuania and Poland support the proposal, as they both seek stronger links with Belarusians. The Czechs support the proposal in principle, but cannot implement it without changes to domestic legislation. Thus, the Czechs advocate referring the proposal to a working group to determine how to implement it.

DODMAN